



Hate Crime Awareness and Education



What is a Hate Crime?

Hate Crimes are a major concern to all Police Departments due to the unique, chilling impact they have on their victims as well as the community. The Skokie Police Department hopes to help the public better understand how to respond to and prevent Hate Crimes from occurring in our community.

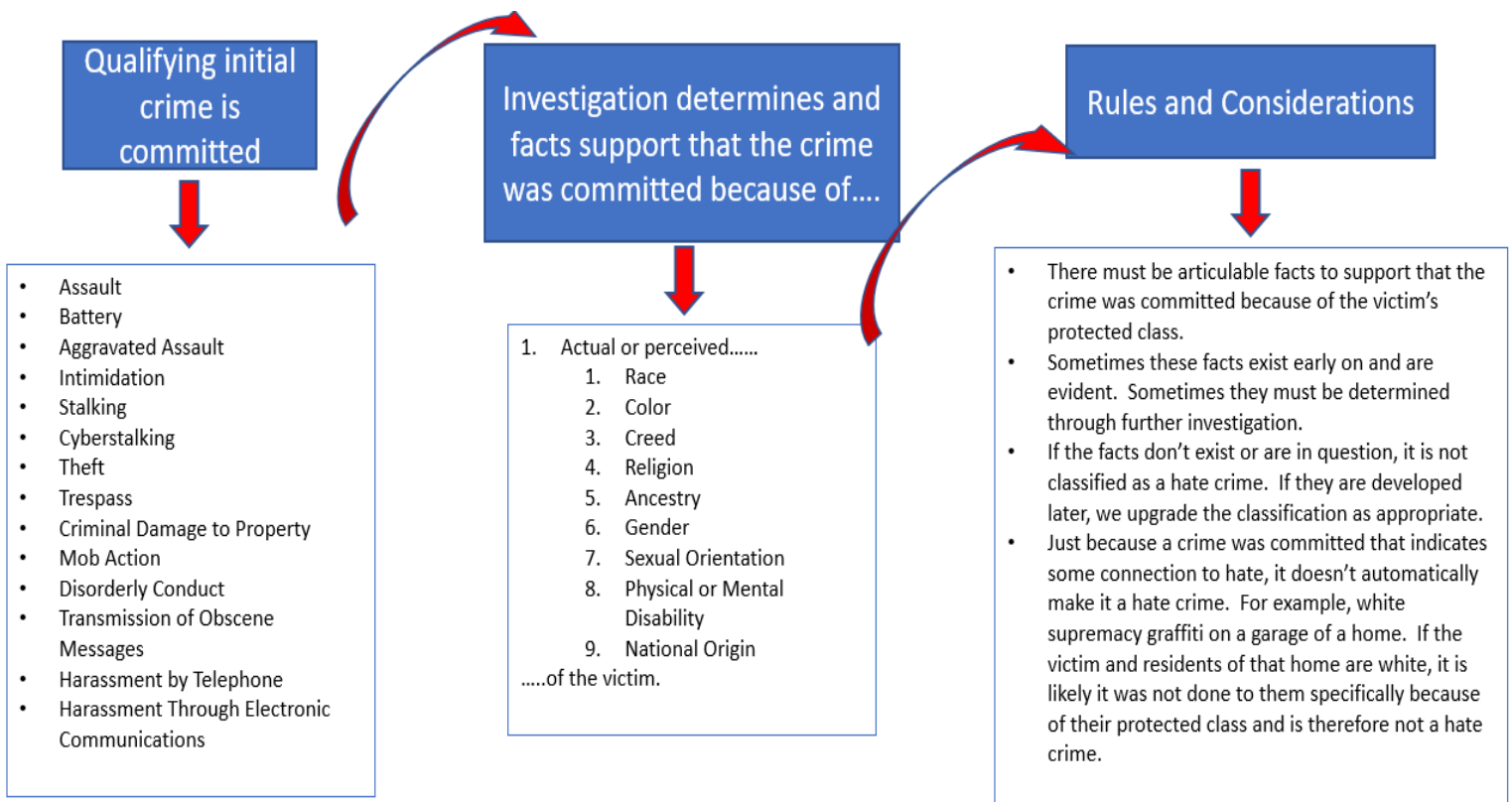
A Hate Crime (governed by Illinois Compiled Statutes 720 ILCS 5/12-7.1) is a predicate or “qualifying” criminal offense that is motivated in whole or in part by an offender’s bias against the actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, physical and/or mental disability, or national origin of the victim.

Per Illinois State Police Hate Crime Incident Reporting Guidelines, **the offender’s criminal act must have been motivated by bias**. The mere fact that an offender is biased against the victim’s race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity or national origin does not mean that a Hate Crime has occurred.

It is important to point out that often acts such as criminal damage to property consisting of racist graffiti will not initially be classified as a Hate Crime without insight into motive. Criminal classifications may change after further investigation by Skokie Police Department Investigators.

“Elements of a Hate Crime” Overview

720 ILCS 5/12-7.1



How Should I Report Potential Hate Crimes or Hate Incidents?

Due to State guidelines requiring articulable facts to support that the crime was committed because of the victim's protected class, The Skokie Police Department is committed to assign any criminal offenses which are potentially motivated by bias or hate for follow up by the Investigations Division. Calling 9-1-1 is the best way to initiate a police response for any in-progress criminal incident. If the reporting of a potential Hate Crime is delayed, or one wishes to remain anonymous, the Skokie Police Department can be contacted in a variety of ways. Below are some ways citizens can share information with the Skokie Police Department.

Alternative Methods of contacting the Skokie Police Department

Police Non-Emergency:
(847) 982-5900

Anonymous Crime Tip
Hotline: (847) 933-TIPS
(8477)

Text-a-Tip: Text "Skokie"
and the information to
847411

Email: Police@Skokie.org

Responding to Hate Crimes Quickly and Effectively is a High Priority to the Skokie Police Department.

Contact the Skokie Police Department immediately upon becoming aware of a criminal offense potentially motivated by hate or bias. Due to the brutal nature of these crimes, victims can feel frustrated, powerless, traumatized or even terrified. These emotions can lead victims to be hesitant to report these incidents to SPD due to fear of retaliation or embarrassment. The support of family, friends, faith-based groups or social services can be helpful to encouraging victims to come forward. The Skokie Police Department has a Department Social Worker/Victim Advocate on staff to assist crime victims in need.

Hate Crimes differ from other crimes in that they have an effect on both the victims as well as the community as a whole. A swift and strong police response increases the likelihood of solving the crime, helps stabilize and calm the community, and aids the victim's recovery. Occasionally, Hate Crimes can create community-wide unrest or escalate into retaliatory action. The Skokie Police Department hopes to avoid these pitfalls through education and strong, pre-established community partnerships. We embrace the idea that the entire community plays a role in public safety and preventing crime.

What About Non-Criminal Hate Related Incidents?

Sometimes citizens experience hateful speech or behavior which, although outright despicable, qualifies as First Amendment protected free speech. The United States Supreme Court has established clearly that speech alone can only be punished in situations where there are "fighting words" directed at another person during a face-to-face encounter. The Skokie Police Department documents incidents such as these in a non-criminal report when reported to them. In incidents such as racist verbal exchanges or gestures, although no criminal enforcement action can be taken, said documentation can prove helpful in understanding the extent of incidents in the community and developing positive actions in response as well as de-escalating potential future incidents. **The Skokie Police Department strongly encourages reporting these incidents to us.**

No individual or group should ever be affected by hateful conduct. The Skokie Police Department stands for and with you in our work to ensure this for all its citizens.